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TAGS: PREL BA IR IS REGION OFFICIALS

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES IRAN, HAMAS WITH
FLETCHER DEAN BOSWORTH

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe. Reason: 1.4 (B)(D)

¶1. (C) In a March 8 meeting with visiting Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Al-Khalifa reviewed Bahrain's views on Iran and Hamas. Shaikh Khalid said that Bahrain is "really worried" about Iran. Bahrain prefers a diplomatic solution, and wants Iran to know that a program to develop nuclear weapons will affect peace and security in the region. If Iran develops a nuclear capability, it would be a simple matter for it to then ask inspectors to leave and move to the next step. Given Iran's ties with Hezbollah and Hamas, not to mention IRGC incursions into Iraq, one has to be worried about what it would do if it had nuclear weapons.

¶2. (C) To make progress with Iran, it would be useful to bring other regional players into the game, Shaikh Khalid said. Bahrain has been engaging Turkey a lot these days, he noted. The Prime Minister recently traveled to Ankara, the Turkish Minister of Interior was here this week, and Shaikh Khalid plans to travel to Ankara in May. Pakistan is another country that possibly could play a positive role, passing a stern message to Iran that it is not just the U.S. and a few Arab and European countries that are concerned -- it is the whole region, broadly defined.

¶3. (C) On Hamas, Shaikh Khalid said that Hamas won the election, and now the international community is obliged to tell Hamas that it must stick to peace, renounce violence, and recognize the right of Israel to exist. By doing this, it would only enhance world support for Palestine's right to exist. He said that Hamas has been sending out some conflicting statements, but hopefully the Khartoum Summit will offer the opportunity to solidify Hamas's move towards peace. By then, it will have formed a government, and it will be up to the new government to listen to its Arab friends. "If it doesn't," he said, "we won't help them. We don't want to go back to 1948."

¶4. (C) Shaikh Khalid said that it is important that funds for Hamas not be cut off at this time for two reasons. First, we don't want Iran, or private sources, to fill the vacuum. Second, we want Hamas, when it is governing, to recognize the importance of this foreign funding for a few months. If at a later date Hamas faces a cut-off of these funds, it will see how harmful the halt in funding is to its interests.

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